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DAVID MESCHUTT



Figure 1. Pair of side chairs, 1780-1800, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, woods not recorded. HOA: 38'', Height at seat: 13'', WOA: 19 1/2, DOA: not recorded. MESDA research file: S-13238.

Four Mecklenburg County, North Carolina Chairs: An Examination of Style and Technology

DALE L. COUCH

During the third quarter of the eighteenth century, large numbers of Scots-Irish, English, and German settlers emigrated to central North Carolina from southeastern Pennsylvania, both eastern and western Maryland, and from western Virginia. The Scots-Irish were the first to reach what is now Mecklenburg County, where they rapidly claimed the most fertile land in the central Yadkin River valley. A large contingent of Pennsylvania Germans, however, settled in the Catawba River Valley just to the west of the Yadkin; this area of settlement included northern Mecklenburg County.¹

A small group of closely-related chairs from that region reveal the presence of a strong chairmaking tradition in northern Mecklenburg during the eighteenth century.² This group includes three identical side chairs (Figs. 1 and 2) and a child's chair (Fig. 3). The chair illustrated in figure 2 has base rounds of hickory; the posts and slats are of maple. One of the side chairs (Fig. 2) retains traces of green paint, and the child's chair was painted blue, the finish now heavily oxidized. The original finish of the other two chairs is not known.

The pronounced ball turnings (Figs. 2b, 3a) on the front stretchers of these chairs is their most prominent stylistic feature, and the most unusual aspect of their character in comparison with other similar chairs of the southern Piedmont. Slightly elongated in profile, these balls are deeply scored in the center, possibly with the point of a skew chisel. The balls are flanked by turned cavettos with fillets (the square-shouldered rings at each side of



the coves, Fig. 2b). Fine scoring is used to emphasize both the fillets and the heavy scored line in the center of the ball. The definition of the cavetto turnings themselves is heightened by

Figure 2. Side chair, 1780-1800, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, hickory and maple. HOA: 39 1/8", Height at seat: 14 1/8", WOA at feet: 20 1/4", DOA at feet: 15 3/8". MESDA accession 3916, photographs by George S. Whiteley, IV.

the approximately one inch of swell of the stretchers at each side of the center turnings.

The upper front round (Fig. 3b) of the child's chair is an interesting variation of this ball turning. A plain flaring cove is substituted for the full cavetto turning. This abbreviated shape appears to be a visual solution to the trapezoidal space created by the splay of the legs. The shorter length of the upper stretcher



Figure 2a. Side view.

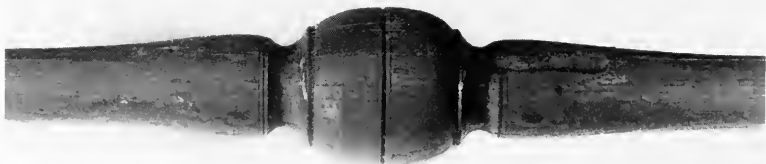


Figure 2b. Detail of stretcher.

calls for a sense of graduation in the turnings that is provided by the contrasting upper turning. The effect of this graduation, and indeed of the visual balance of the chair, is diminished by an improperly-replaced right front leg which does not match the eighty-degree splay of the left leg.

The posts of these chairs taper from bottom to top, a feature which is particularly accentuated by the greater length of the rear posts. The seats of the side chairs are relatively low, approximately fifteen inches on the chair in figure 2, thereby providing the appearance of greater vertical height to the backs. The feet of the chairs in figure 1 are missing most of their original height. In each instance, all four feet are turned. Although turned rear feet may be found on northern chairs, particularly early examples, they are far more common in the South. With the exception of the neck where these feet touch the floor, the ovoid profiles (Fig. 2e) generally reflect the center turning of the front stretcher. This is not true of the more diminutive rear feet (Fig. 3d) of the child's chair, however. All of the feet which retain their full height are deeply scored in the center, again following the form of the stretcher turnings, as do the cavettos at the top of each of the front feet. This necking is omitted from the rear feet, and the turnings are less robust.

All of the finials on these chairs are virtually identical. They are composed of a ball-like knop (Figs. 2c, 3c) surmounting a pair of cove turnings, much in the style of simpler versions of chair

finials common to the Connecticut River Valley. This sort of finial, however, very likely represents nothing more than a strong British tradition, for it occurs on chairs from Maine to Alabama.

The slats on this group of chairs are competently shaped, and represent a strong regional stylistic development. They show evidence of riving, but only in a minor way, since the surfaces are well finished. Many southern Piedmont chairs, in contrast, show relatively little dressing of their slats, and consequently

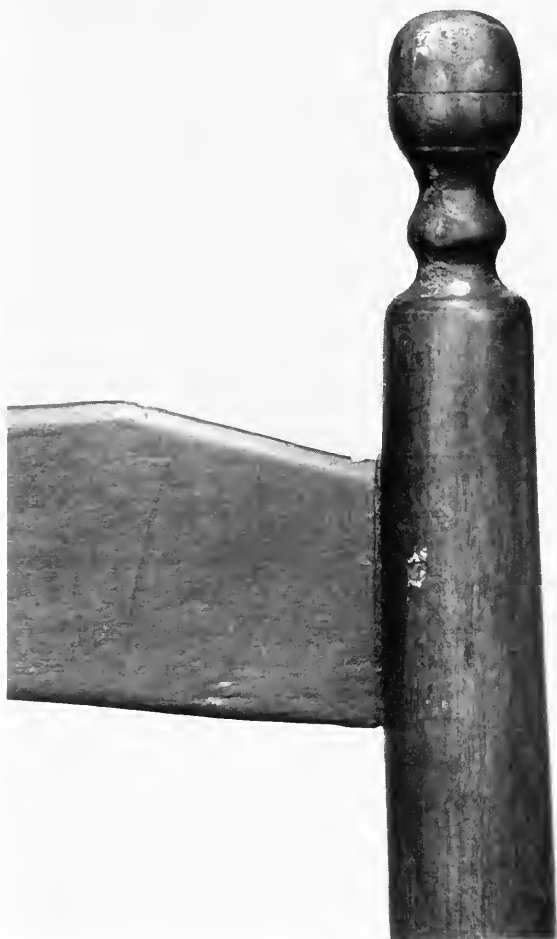


Figure 2c. Detail of finial.

display prominent split surfaces. The bottom edge of each slat of the Mecklenburg chairs forms a pendant at the center, possibly a derivation of chairmaking styles that originated in the Low Countries; similar slats on Dutch ladderback chairs occur in engravings as early as the sixteenth century. The precise shaping of the slats, coupled with the fact that they show very little graduation in height, indicates the probable use of a pattern to lay them out. The chairmaker sharply chamfered the upper front edge of each slat, probably using both a drawknife and a spokeshave, providing a sense of delicacy to the slats while at the same time accentuating the arc of their tops. Thin squarish trunnels inserted from the rear pin the top and third slats to the back posts of the side chairs; similar trunnels are used only for the top slat of the youth chair.



Figure 2d. Detail of front foot.



Figure 2e. Detail of rear foot.

The tenons on the base rounds of these chairs reveal technological signatures of this chairmaker's work.³ Several of these tenons are exposed on the youth chair, and two tenons of the side chair in figure 2 have been X-rayed. Following the traditional construction of a post-and-round chair, the tenons appear to have been turned on the lathe. The tenons of the seat lists were cut by hand, since the somewhat oval form of the lists did not permit lathe-turning. The lists are cut in this form to provide extra strength, a feature common to most post-and-round chairs. After the tenons of the base rounds were turned, the artisan whittled an indentation in the tenons just forward of the tenon shoulders. This notching is evident in the X-ray, which illustrates the upper line of a round and its tenon (Fig. 2f). The semi-green wood of the posts shrank into the notches after the chair was completed, as the X-ray reveals, thereby providing a locked joint which could not pull apart. This was common practice in the production of all turned chairs, but it was far more common for the chairmaker to turn the tenons with a bag-shaped profile rather than to trim them by hand with an edge-tool.

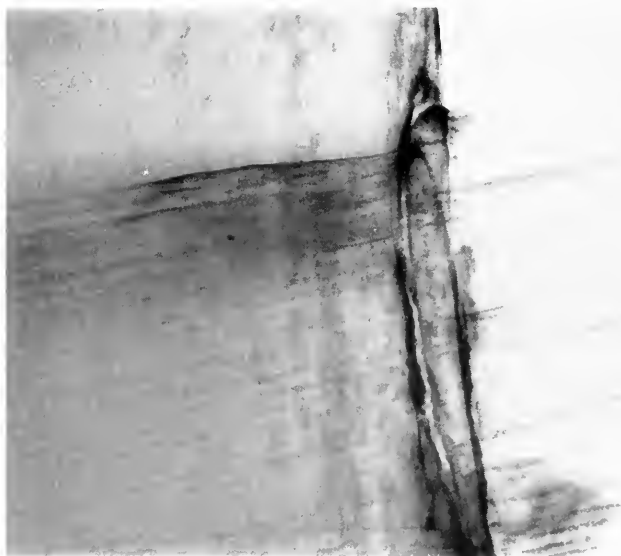


Figure 2f. X-ray of base round and tenon. Courtesy of Dr. Sheri Katz, DDS.

After whittling the shoulder indentation into the tenon, the chairmaker shaved the sides flat (Fig. 2g), and chamfered the ends to permit the tenon to be driven into a slightly undersize hole. Following usual practice, the holes for the tenons on these chairs appear to have been drilled with a spoon-bit auger which left a round-bottomed cavity. Shaving the tenon flat on both sides, like the whittled shoulder notches, is somewhat at variance with usual chairmaking methodology. The flats, however, served at least two purposes: once the tenon was inserted and the post had shrunk around it, the flats prevented the rung from rotating within the mortise. Further, by reducing surface area, the flats allowed the tenons to be driven into their undersized mortises with greater ease.

Two empty mortises on the upper posts of the child's chair present an interesting question of how the chair was used. Such exposed mortises on back posts usually indicate the loss of arms. Evidence demonstrates, however, that these mortises represent a nineteenth-century adaptation of the chair to the role of an infant's high chair. The upper mortises were bored after assembly, and they intersect the slat tenon on the right post, not a usual practice except on some seventeenth and early eighteenth century New England chairs. There is no indication that arm supports

were cut off the front posts. In addition, the twelve-inch depth of the chair seat is too large for an infant, and the height of the seat is nineteen inches, lower than most high chairs. Foot wear is concentrated upon the upper front stretcher, just at the proper height for an older child rather than an infant.

The empty mortises may have been intended to receive a flexible bent rod or perhaps even a simple joined frame as a guard to retain an infant. The original form of the chair, however, is that of a child's side chair. Although rarer than armed high chairs, such tall side chairs are occasionally encountered, particularly in the Delaware Valley region.

Aside from this possible geographic relationship in regard to an unusual form of chair, there are other significant ties between the Mecklenburg County chairs and the work of Delaware Valley chairmakers. Ladderback chairs in the classic Philadelphia-area style are characterized by a number of highly recognizable details, such as delicately tapered front and rear posts, considerable verticality that is accentuated by four to six deeply-arched graduated slats, vase turnings below the seat on the front legs, bold vase-and-ring-turned front stretchers, and robust ball or turnip-shaped front feet that are usually larger in diameter than the legs. The rear posts commonly have a sharply radiused taper where they meet the floor. Finials are normally in the form of a compressed ball, or take the form of an acorn-like turning. Seats are usually of rush, and occasionally are surrounded by an applied skirt shaped on the bottom edges. Most of the salient features of this style are embodied in the side chair in figure 4.



Figure 2g. Artist's rendering showing the side flats of a tenon. Drawing by Sara Dell Autry.



Figure 3. Child's side chair, 1780-1800, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Woods not recorded. HOA: not recorded, Height at seat: 19'', WOA: not recorded, DOA: 12''. Private Collection, photographs by George S. Whiteley, IV.

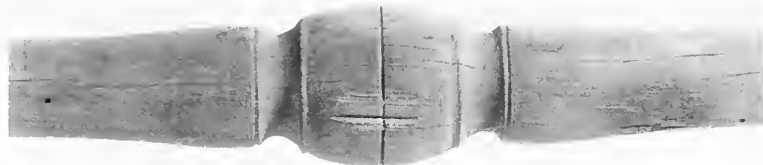


Figure 3a. Detail of bottom stretcher.

The Mecklenburg County chairs illustrated here are a stylistic extension of the southeastern Pennsylvania fashion, although with significant divergences. The same sense of verticality, coupled with the delicate tapered legs, provide the strongest details which bear comparison with Pennsylvania work. New England chairs tend to have front legs that are essentially the same diameter from top to bottom, and rarely are the feet larger than the diameter of the legs. The form of the slats, the Connecticut Valley-like finials, and the turned rear feet, however, reveal the merging of

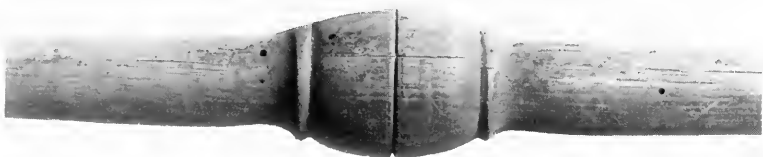


Figure 3b. Detail of top stretcher.

other traditions and/or the development of regional style in Mecklenburg. The feet seem to represent a local modification of the Pennsylvania norm, particularly in regard to their relatively large diameter and strong cavetto turning separating them from the legs. However, the legs lack the dramatic radiused tapering just above the cavetto that is typical of the Delaware Valley, and the feet of the North Carolina chairs have much greater vertical height. However, the large geographic distribution of the



Figure 3c. Detail of finial.



Figure 3d. Detail of rear foot.

Delaware Valley style in chairmaking, even within Pennsylvania proper, brought about regional developments that contrast with Philadelphia. An armchair (Fig. 5) in the collection of the Yale University Art Gallery, for example, has turned arms quite unlike the sawn arms that are usual on Delaware Valley work. The arm supports on this chair are less architectural than one might expect on Philadelphia work, and, most importantly, the massive front stretchers have oblong ball turnings in their centers which are remarkably like those of the North Carolina examples. Pennsylvania couches, very likely Philadelphia work, of an earlier date have been observed with the same detail. This armchair, however, more than likely was the product of an outlying county such as Chester or Lancaster.

There is little to indicate that the Piedmont artisan who made these chairs either was trained in the Delaware Valley or simply



Figure 4. Side chair, Delaware River Valley of Pennsylvania, 1770-1790. Maple. HOA: 41 11/16"; Height at seat: 16 5/8"; W/OA: 18 1/2"; DOA: 13 13/16". Courtesy Old Salem, Inc., MRF S-14279.

attempted to recreate the visual drama of a transplanted northern prototype. Some other North Carolina seating furniture, in fact, reveals a far greater use of the Pennsylvania stylistic vocabulary. The fact that two of these chairs descended in a Scots-Irish family suggests that the artisan may have worked after the period of initial

settlement and during a period in which the acculturation of several ethnic groups was taking place in the Carolina Piedmont. It is possible that the digression from the classical Delaware Valley

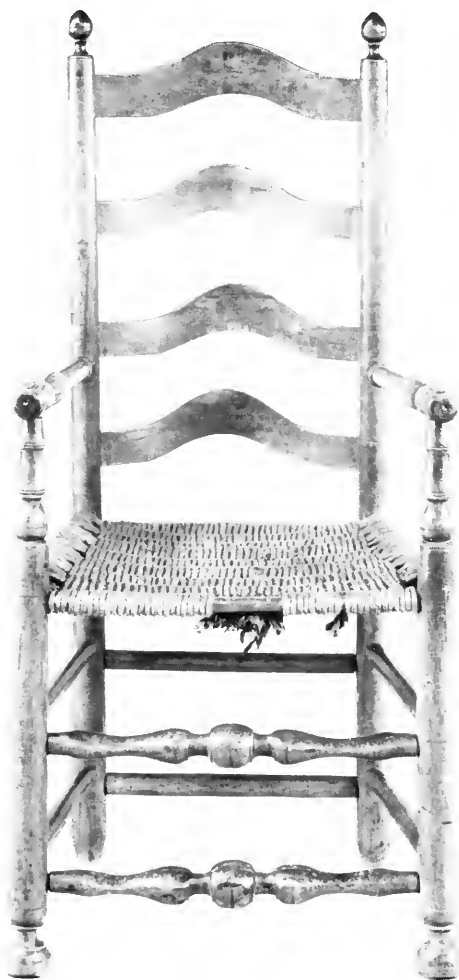


Figure 5. Armchair, Delaware River Valley (or adjacent counties) of Pennsylvania, 1720-1760. Maple. HOA: 41 1/4", Height at seat: 16 3/8", W/OA: 18", DOA: 14". Courtesy of the Yale University Art Gallery, Mabel Brady Garvan Collection, accession 1930-2042.

style is the result of just such a cultural confluence among these ethnic groups.

Ultimately, the Mecklenburg County chairs are the product of Piedmont mannerism. They demonstrate the retention of elements of a chairmaking tradition which had traversed several hundred miles of the back country South. At the same time, however, they strongly reflect the substantial geographic separation from more urban centers of style. They are the product of an artisan working in markedly different circumstances. While the Mecklenburg County chairs convey a simpler aesthetic than their northern counterparts, they make a fine regional statement of their own.

Mr. Couch is a reference archivist at the Georgia Department of Archives and History in Atlanta. He was a participant in the 1986 MESDA/UNCG Summer Institute.

FOOTNOTES

1. For the settlement history of Mecklenburg County, see the following: J. B. Alexander, M.D., *The History of Mecklenburg County, from 1740-1900* (Charlotte: Observer Printing House, 1902); G. D. Bernheim, *History of the German Settlements in North and South Carolina* (Philadelphia, 1872; reprinted, Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1975); D. A. Tompkins, *History of Mecklenburg County and the City of Charlotte, 1740-1903*, 2 vols. (Charlotte: Observer Printing House, 1903); Robert W. Ramsay, *Carolina Cradle: Settlement of the Northwest Carolina Frontier, 1747-1762* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1964).
2. Each of these chairs has retained provenance. The pair of side chairs (Fig. 1) recorded by MESDA are noted to have descended in the Torrence and Ladda families of Huntersville in northern Mecklenburg County. (MESDA research file S-13238). The side chair (Fig. 2) now in MESDA's collection has a history of descent in the Nantz (or Nance), Ladda, and Knox families of the Huntersville-Kernias area; the child's chair was found in the same general area.
 The Torrence family was a Scots-Irish family who emigrated to North Carolina from Pennsylvania. They were distributed throughout central Piedmont North Carolina, including Mecklenburg County. The Nantz family appear to be of Germanic Pennsylvania origin. For condensed treatments of these genealogies see: *The Heritage of Iredell County*, published by the Genealogical Society of Iredell County, Statesville, North Carolina, 1980. For consolidated documentary sources on these families see: The Mary Louise McCubbins Collection, Rowan Public Library, Salisbury, North Carolina (filmed by Genealogical Society of Salt Lake City, Utah in 1956). For information on the Ladda-Torrence connection, see: Mrs. J. B. Eaves, *Sketch of Lineal Descendents of Samuel Wilson, Sr.*, (Rock Hill, S. C.: The London Printery, undated, c. 1900-1925), p. 108.
3. For an excellent treatment of chairmaking in general, and for a lucid explanation of chair joints, see: John D. Alexander, Jr., *Make a Chair From a Tree: An Introduction to Working with Green Wood* (Newton, Conn.: The Taunton Press, 1978). See particularly pages 69 through 77 for tenon construction.

The author would like to thank George Whiteley IV and George Pearl for photographs, Susan Dell Autry for her drawing in Figure 2g, and Dr. Sheri Katz D.D.S. for the X-ray reproduced here. The author would also like to thank O. O. Thompson, Jr., for his careful help in gathering information regarding provenance.



Figure 1. Westover, by Lucy Harrison, daughter of Benjamin Harrison of Brandon, 1825-1830. Ink and water color on paper, full size 9 3/4 X 6 5/16; this view is a detail and represents the south front of the house. MESDA Research File (MRF) 14276.

William Byrd and His Portrait Collection

DAVID MESCHUTT

The will of Mrs. William Byrd III (née Mary Willing), probated on 20 April 1814, is a most remarkable document, for it contains a checklist of what was at one time the most distinguished portrait collection in America — that of her father-in-law, William Byrd II. The will lists some thirty paintings (see Appendix) that either belonged or probably belonged to him, in addition to another dozen that appear to have been added to the collection after his death and were presumably the property of his son, William III. We are concerned here only with those paintings once owned by William Byrd II and his motivation for assembling such a collection.¹

William Byrd II was born on his father's plantation in Virginia on 28 March 1674. His father, also named William, was the son of a London goldsmith and had come to Virginia before 1670. William I's uncle, Thomas Stegge, was the auditor general of the colony and carried on an extensive fur trade with the Indians. He had amassed a great deal of money and property, but, although he was married, he had no children. He persuaded William I, his sister's eldest son, to emigrate to the New World with the promise of making him his heir. Not long after the young man's arrival, Stegge died and William I, only 18, inherited the estate. In 1673 he married a widow, Mary Horsmanden Filmer; his first child and only son was born the following year.²

When he was about seven, William II was sent to England for his education. Although his father had also grown up in the mother country, their circumstances were very different. William II was the son and heir of a wealthy planter, while his father had

been the child of a goldsmith of modest means. Young William was placed in the care of his maternal grandfather, Warham Horsmanden, a country gentleman of Purleigh, Essex, who enrolled the boy in the local academy, Felsted Grammar School. Felsted's purpose was to give its students "a gentleman's education"; it had a reputation for emphasizing both piety and learning. Oliver Cromwell had sent his sons there. Byrd received a classical education, learned Latin and Greek, and developed an appreciation for literature that never deserted him. His classmates were the sons of the local gentry of Essex and Surrey; Byrd, the colonial, must have stood out from them. It may be that his years at Felsted were less than pleasant, for he never mentioned the school in his diaries, letters, or other writings. He did not send his own son to school in England.³

Many of Byrd's Felsted classmates went on to Oxford or Cambridge, but William Byrd I had not sent his son to school merely to become a scholar. When William II was sixteen, he was sent to Holland to serve as an apprentice to two merchants in Rotterdam. However, he did not care for the country, and returned to England to continue his business training with the London counting house of Perry & Lane. In 1692 he commenced the study of law at Middle Temple.⁴

He enrolled there as William Byrd, "son and heir of William Byrd of Cree Church, London, Esq." By emphasizing his father's English origins, Byrd identified himself as an Englishman. His classmates were at the top of London society; among them were the noted playwright William Congreve and the dramatist and future editor of Shakespeare, Nicholas Rowe. Shortly after he was admitted to the bar in 1695, Byrd met Sir Robert Southwell (1635-1702), the principal secretary of state for Ireland and president of the Royal Society.⁵ It was through Southwell's influence that Byrd was elected to membership in the Society. This was a great honor, and considering that he was only twenty-two, a surprising one as well. The Society membership very likely represents more about Byrd's personality and his effect on people than about his aptitude for scientific research, for although Byrd was very interested in natural history, he was by no means prominent in that field. He obviously made a good impression, and Sir Robert regarded him as a protégé, a person of much promise. Byrd was proud both of his membership in the society and of his friendship with Southwell; both are noted on his tombstone.⁶ Through Southwell he met a number of

scholars and noblemen, including Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery; John Campbell, Duke of Argyll; John Perceval, Earl of Egmont; and Charles (later Sir Charles) Wager, who later was appointed First Lord of the Admiralty. All of them became Byrd's friends, and he eventually owned portraits of each one.

Except for a brief stay in Virginia in 1696-1697, Byrd remained in England until his father's death in 1704. He returned to Virginia to claim his inheritance, which included all of his father's land, 26,231 acres. The best portions of the estate comprised the lands on the James River where the city of Richmond was later located,⁷ as well as the fourteen-hundred acre plantation called Westover, in Charles City County.⁸ (Fig. 1) Byrd succeeded his father as receiver-general of Virginia and established himself as one of the colony's leading citizens. In 1706 he married Lucy Parke, daughter of Daniel Parke, governor of the Leeward Islands.⁹ For the next decade he lived the life of a country gentleman, a life well-documented in the earliest of his diaries to survive.¹⁰ Eventually, however, he accumulated a number of private business concerns that required a trip to England. He found it necessary to settle the complicated estate of his father-in-law Daniel Parke, who had been murdered in an uprising on Antigua in 1710, and he had several grievances against Virginia's resident governor, Alexander Spotswood, that he wished to present to the Board of Trade. During the winter of 1714-1715, he sailed for England. Except for a period of about a year and a half—December, 1719 to the summer of 1721—when he was back in Virginia, Byrd spent the next ten years in the British Isles. He re-entered London society with ease, renewing his friendships with Egmont, Argyll, Orrery, Wager, and other friends from his student days. He visited their homes and began to acquire their portraits.

Byrd kept a diary and wrote a great many letters, probably more than any other colonial American save Cotton Mather. It is very frustrating, therefore, to find almost nothing written by Byrd about his paintings. Perhaps he wrote about them in those diaries which have disappeared, but at present we have only the diary entry for 25 January 1718 and two letters written in the mid-1730s in which he mentions specific pictures, and nothing at all about his collection as a whole.

The earliest reference we have to a painting in Byrd's collection is the 1718 entry in his diary: “. . . about 3 o'clock went to the Duke of Argyll's, where I stayed two hours before the Duke came home . . . The Duke was merry and gave us some tokay. About



Figure 2. William Byrd II, attributed to Sir Godfrey Kneller, c. 1695-1700, English. Oil on canvas, 49 1/2 X 39 3/4. Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, accession 1956-561.

seven I waited on the Duke to the coffeehouse, and asked him for his picture, which he promised me."¹¹ We know that the Duke complied, since his portrait was in Byrd's collection and it indeed exists today. From the matter-of-fact fashion in which he mentions the request in his diary, however, we may assume that it was not the first portrait to come into his possession; there are two or three others which he almost certainly acquired earlier.

One of these paintings, and possibly the first to enter his collection, was a portrait of Byrd himself. This portrait (Fig. 2), shows a young man with a sensuous face. We see a man-about-town, a wit, "a bit of a strutting peacock." It is a popular notion in the South that all British ancestral portraits from the first quarter of the eighteenth century were painted by Sir Godfrey Kneller, and most of the portraits in Byrd's collection have been attributed to him at one time or another. Byrd's likeness, however, indeed



Figure 3. Sir Robert Southwell, attributed to the studio of Sir Godfrey Kneller, c. 1696-1704, English. Oil on canvas, 49 X 39 1/2. Collection of the Virginia Historical Society, MRF S-14277.



Figure 4. Daniel Parke, by John Closterman, c. 1705, English. Oil on canvas, 48 3/4 X 39. Collection of the Virginia Historical Society, MRF S-14278. Editor's note: the diamonds around the miniature portrait of Queen Anne are of a cabachon cut.

is one of the very few which can be attributed to Kneller, or at least to his studio, with some certainty. After Kneller became England's leading portrait painter, he seldom painted an entire portrait. He painted the face directly onto the canvas, drew the pose in outline, then called upon his assistants to complete the painting.¹² This may have been the case with the Byrd portrait.

The portrait must have been painted near the end of Byrd's first sojourn in England or sometime during his second (1697-1704). He may have commissioned it to mark his election to the Royal Society in 1696. Another portrait perhaps acquired at this time is that of Byrd's mentor, Sir Robert Southwell (Fig. 3). How Byrd came into possession of it is not known. He may have received it directly from Sir Robert himself or from Southwell's son Edward. It is equally possible that the Virginian purchased it directly from Sir Godfrey Kneller's studio, for the portrait is a copy of one which Kneller painted about 1685-90. Although Kneller's own hand is nowhere apparent in the copy, it probably was produced under his supervision by assistants.

A third portrait acquired by Byrd at an early date was that of his father-in-law, Daniel Parke (Fig. 4). Parke, a Virginian, had been an aide-de-camp to John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough at the Battle of Blenheim; Parke held a colonel's commission. Marlborough chose him to deliver the news of the 13 August 1704 victory to Queen Anne. By custom, the bearer of good news received £500. When Queen Anne received Parke and asked him to name his reward, he requested not the money but Her Majesty's portrait. "The flattered Queen ordered for him a miniature set in diamonds and gave him not £500 but 1000 guineas." "I think 500 pound is enough for the bearer," wrote Marlborough when next he sent news of a victory. Parke sat for at least three portraits and, since he is wearing the Queen's miniature in all three, they were painted no earlier than late August, 1704. Furthermore, since he was appointed governor of the Leeward Islands in 1705, they could not have been painted later than 1706, when he sailed for the Caribbean. The three artists who painted Parke were Sir Godfrey Kneller, Michael Dahl, and John Closterman; it was Closterman's portrait that became part of Byrd's collection.¹³ Byrd married Lucy Parke in 1706, and it is possible that the portrait was a wedding present from Colonel Parke. The Colonel's other daughter, Frances, was also married about this time, in either 1706 or late 1705, to John Custis. Another version of the Closterman portrait has descended in that branch of Parke's descendants. This suggests that Parke's daughters received the copies of their father's portraits at about the same time.

We may suppose, therefore, that William Byrd owned three portraits at the time he returned to England in 1715; the subjects were Byrd himself, Daniel Parke, and Sir Robert Southwell. The

ownership of family portraits, including the head of the household, was not unusual among wealthy Virginia planters. No portraits of Byrd's parents are known; presumably they were not painted due to the lack of artists working in Virginia in the late 17th century.¹⁴ The elder Byrd did wish to have portraits of his family in his house, however. In 1690 he wrote to his brother-in-law, Daniel Horsmanden, that "I . . . hope you will send us (according to your promise) yours (with your fair lady's) picture to adorn my new house."¹⁵ There is no evidence that Horsmanden complied with this request since no such portraits are known to have been a Westover, but Byrd's letter is interesting in view of the many portraits of family and friends later acquired by his son. It shows that both father and son were aware of the importance of portraits in maintaining ties with distant relatives and acquaintances, but William Byrd II expanded on that concept by his creation of a Virginia version of a traditional English portrait collection.

The earliest English portrait collections date from the first half of the 16th century. At that time England had entered a relatively stable political period. Increasingly large parcels of land had come into private ownership, and manor houses were rapidly replacing fortified castles as the seats of country estates.¹⁶ In a similar fashion, portraiture began to flourish in Virginia after the threat of starvation and annihilation by the Indians had passed and the colonists left stockaded settlements to acquire large tracts of land and build plantation houses. Many Englishmen became wealthy on plunder from the monasteries suppressed by King Henry VIII and commissioned portraits of themselves to mark their new position in society. They acquired portraits of past and present English monarchs since a royal portrait was a symbol of loyalty to the Crown; they also commissioned likenesses of prominent English and European individuals, both men and women. The most notable of the early collectors was John, Lord Lumley (1533?-1609), who owned many portraits of his family, his English and foreign contemporaries, and English royalty, including Holbein's drawings of Henry VII and Henry VIII.¹⁷ During the seventeenth century, the portrait was considered to be equal to a written biography in preserving a person's fame and merit. The examination of portraits, as portrait painter Jonathan Richardson noted in his 1715 *Essay on the Theory of Painting*, stimulated individuals to become "excited to imitate the Good Actions, and persuaded to shun the Vices of those whose Examples are thus

set before them.”¹⁸ What has been called “the most splendid portrait gallery ever put together by a statesman in England”¹⁹ was assembled by Edward Hyde, 1st Earl of Clarendon (1609-1674) in the years following Charles II’s restoration to the throne in 1660. Part of Clarendon’s collection contained portraits of famous men of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, but the bulk of it consisted of portraits of people he knew and who were prominent during the period in which he lived. The Clarendon collection was thus an iconographic account of late seventeenth-century English history. The Westover collection represents an American parallel, although two generations removed.²⁰ The reason why men such as Byrd and Clarendon collected the portraits of family and friends was best expressed by Samuel Johnson:

Whoever is delighted with his own picture must derive his pleasure from the pleasure of another. Every man is always present to himself, and has, therefore, little need of his own resemblance, nor can desire it, but for the sake of those whom he loves, and by whom he hopes to be remembered. The use of this art is a natural and reasonable consequence of affection; and though, like other human actions, it is often complicated with pride, yet even such pride is more laudable than that by which palaces are covered with pictures that, however excellent, neither imply the owner’s virtue, nor excite it.

Genius is chiefly exerted in historical pictures; and the art of the painter of portraits is often lost in the obscurity of the subject. But it is in painting as in life; what is greatest is not always best. I should grieve to see Reynolds transfer to heroes and to goddesses, to empty splendour and to airy fiction, that art which is now employed in diffusing friendship, in reviving tenderness, in quickening the affections of the absent, and continuing the presence of the dead.²¹

Byrd’s collection provided a way of “visiting” with his friends after returning to Virginia. Byrd was aware of this and expressed himself on the subject in an engaging letter to his friend John Perceval, Earl of Egmont:

I had the honour of your Lordships commands of the 9th of September [1735], and since that have [had] the

pleasure of conversing a great deal with your picture. It is incomparably well done & the painter has not only hit you ayr, but some of the vertues too which used to soften and enliven your features. So that every connoisseur that sees it, can see t'was drawn for a generous, benevolent, & worthy person. It is no wonder perhaps that I could discern so many good things in the portrait, when I knew them so well in the original, just like those who pick out the meaning of the Bible, altho' in a strange language, because they were acquainted with the subject before. But I own I was pleas'd to find some strangers able to read your Lordships character on the canvas, as plain as if they had been physiognomists by profession.²²

Nine months earlier he had written to his sister-in-law, Jane Pratt Taylor, "We often discourse with you in effigie, and call the painter a bungler for falling so short of the original. I hope you are not grown so thin as he has made you, because a lady can't loose her enbonpoint, without haveing some of her health go along with it."²³ (Fig. 5)

Although the Byrds owned many more portraits than most Virginians, other families did acquire such paintings. William Fitzhugh (1651-1701) arrived in Virginia about 1673, purchased a tract of land in Stafford County, and built it into an estate patterned after that of the English country gentry. Portraits were an important part of Fitzhugh's manner of living. In 1687, he wrote his brother Henry in England: "As in my last I intimated & desired your Picture & our Coat of Arms . . . so again I must repeat my former desires & wishes either to see you in person, or to see you truly personated by your lovely picture."²⁴ When Fitzhugh died in 1701, he bequeathed to his son William "my own & Wife's pictures & the other 6 pictures of my Relations." Contemporaries of William Byrd I, William Randolph of Turkey Island (1651-1711), Robert Bolling (1646-1709), and Richard Lee II (1647-1714) all owned portraits of themselves, and Randolph and Lee owned portraits of their wives as well.²⁶ The first decades of the eighteenth century saw a great increase in the number of portraits painted in and imported to Virginia. Around 1722 William Brodnax (1675-1727) of Jamestown commissioned portraits of himself, his wife, and their two sons and daughter; the same artist appears to have painted the seven members of the Edward Jaquelin family of Jamestown.²⁷ From a study of wills,



Figure 5. Jane Pratt Taylor, by Enoch Seeman, 1734, English. Oil on canvas, 50 1/4 X 40. Collection of the Virginia Historical Society.

inventories, and public records it would appear that most well-to-do Virginians of the first quarter of the eighteenth century owned several family portraits and a number of engravings. The latter often were likenesses of the current or a past monarch. In Prince William County, merchant William Dunlop (d.1739) owned a collection of prints of English notables, including John Milton, John Gay, Nicholas Rowe (Byrd's classmate at the Middle Temple), and Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford.²⁸



Figure 6. Barrister Dutton, artist unidentified, not dated, English. Oil on canvas, 29 3/4 X 25. Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, accession 1966-211.

What distinguished the collection of William Byrd II from those of his Virginia neighbors was its size, scope, and quality. He owned approximately thirty paintings, far more than anyone else in the colony; with one or two exceptions, he acquired these through his own means rather than by inheritance. The artists were among the best of the day. If very few are actually products of Sir Godfrey Kneller's studio, it should be observed that Byrd patronized artists whose reputations at the time were as great as

Sir Godfrey's, or nearly so. Byrd's collection should be compared not with those of his neighbors in Virginia, but with the ones found in the country houses of England.

Byrd's appreciation of the fine arts is reflected in his ownership of a number of books on the subject, including Du Fresnoy's 1695 *The Art of Painting* and Roger de Piles's 1681 *Dissertation sur Ouranges des plus fameux Peintres*. From 1717 (possibly earlier) until 4 March 1718 he studied drawing with Eleazar Albin (fl. 1713-1759), a noted watercolorist and naturalist.²⁹ That Byrd was considered to be a connoisseur by his family and friends can be seen in a letter to him from his brother-in-law John Custis, dated 10 April 1723: "[I] entreat you to get me two peices of as good painting as you can procure . . . I should not give you this trouble but that I well know you have good judgment in painting and I had much rather have none than have daubing."³⁰

It is not known how the artists were selected to paint the portraits that Byrd owned, but it is probable that they were chosen by the sitters. The Duke of Argyll, for instance, was a major patron of the Scottish painter William Aikman, and a number of portraits of the Duke by this artist exist, including that which belonged to Byrd. Byrd's portrait of Sir Robert Walpole is a copy of one which may have belonged to Sir Robert Walpole himself; unfortunately, the artists who executed both the original and the copy are not known.³¹ Oft-portrayed individuals such as Walpole — probably the most-painted man of his time — and Argyll might have given Byrd copies of portraits already painted, while lesser individuals like Sir Wilfrid Lawson (Fig. 8) and "Barrister" Dutton (Fig. 6) may have given him original portraits, as Nathaniel Walthoe later did.³² There is no evidence that Byrd paid for any of these portraits. They seem rather to have been given to him in response to his requests. Gifts of this sort were occasionally reciprocated, but the only one of Byrd's English friends who is known to have owned a portrait of the Virginian was the Earl of Orrery, whose own likeness belonged to Byrd. It is possible that the two men exchanged portraits at the same time, although there is no documentation of that.

One artist may be considered at length in a discussion of Byrd's collection, since at least three of Byrd's paintings can be attributed to him. This is Hans Hysing (also spelled Hyssing and Huyssing; d. 1753). A native of Stockholm, he emigrated to England in 1700 and studied under Michael Dahl. A fellow Swede working in London by 1682, Dahl has been called "Kneller's only serious



Figure 7. William Byrd II, attributed to Hans Hysing, c. 1722-1726, English. This portrait belonged to the Earl of Orrery and was not part of the Westover collection. Oil on canvas, 50 X 41. Courtesy of the Virginia Historical Society.

rival in public patronage.”³³ Dahl did not paint as well as Sir Godfrey, but he was an artist of merit, and a pleasant, unassuming man whose geniality is reflected in the portraits he painted. His pupil, Hysing, continued this style well into the eighteenth century. The portrait of William Byrd which belonged to the Earl of Orrery and is now owned by the Virginia Historical Society (Fig. 7) has been attributed to Hysing.³⁴ A portrait of Sir Wilfrid



Figure 8. Sir Wilfrid Lawson, attributed to Hans Hysing, c. 1722-1726, English. Oil on canvas, 50 1/2 X 39 1/2. Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, accession 1966-210.

Lawson in Byrd's collection (Fig. 8) also can be attributed to him; it is characteristic of his style and moreover is a virtual duplicate of the Byrd portrait. Only the background and, of course, the head, are different; the pose and costume are virtually identical. The "incomparably well done" portrait of the Earl of Egmont mentioned above is almost certainly Hysing's work; it is a bust-length replica of a three-quarter length painting rendered

in 1733.³⁵ Egmont's pose in this painting is a mirror image of that in the portraits of Byrd and Lawson. The replica may be the painting mentioned in Egmont's diary under date of 25 February 1734: "I . . . called on Mr. Hyssing, the painter, in Leicester Fields to pay him for the copy of my picture (a head), which cost 4 guineas."³⁶ He unfortunately does not say who the copy was for, but since no other copy of the Hysing portrait is known,³⁷ it probably was painted for Byrd.

The one signed English portrait in Byrd's collection is that of his sister-in-law, Jane Pratt Taylor, which bears the signature of Enoch Seeman and the date 1734 (Fig. 5). Seeman (1690?-1745), a native of Danzig, Prussia (now Gdansk, Poland), emigrated to England as a young man, and by 1717 enjoyed a substantial patronage. His sitters seem to have been individuals who were less prepared to pay the fees commanded by the leading portrait painters; in 1743 he was given the commission to paint Lady Cust and her nine children because Hogarth had asked too high a price. A remark by the Duchess of Marlborough suggests that he was employed by the upper classes as a copyist: "Seeman copies very well, and sometimes draws the faces like."³⁸ This suggests that he made accurate copies of other artist's work but may have been less successful in painting from life. Byrd may have expressed dissatisfaction with Mrs. Taylor's portrait in calling the "painter a bungler for falling so short of the original," but it is equally possible that he was simply flattering the sitter.

For nearly a decade after his final return to Virginia, Byrd did not add to his collection, but in 1734 or 1735 the portraits of Egmont and Jane Taylor arrived from England. It was in the latter year that Byrd acquired his first paintings by an American artist. These were portraits of his children by Charles Bridges (1670-1747). Bridges arrived in Williamsburg from England in May, 1735. By December of the same year he had met Byrd and had received a commission to paint the Byrd children. On 22 December Byrd wrote to Alexander Spotswood, introducing Bridges by observing that "He has drawn my children, and several others in this neighbourhood, and tho' he have not the masterly hand of a Lilly [i.e., Sir Peter Lely] or a Kneller, yet had he liv'd so long ago, as when places were given to the most deserving, he might have pretended to be serjeant-painter of Virginia."³⁹ The implication is that Bridges painted all six of Byrd's children, but this almost certainly was not the case. His two daughters by his first wife were in their twenties, and Byrd already owned a



Figure 9. Evelyn Byrd, artist unidentified, c. 1725-1726, English. Oil on canvas, 50 1/4 X 40 1/4. Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, accession 1941-76.

portrait of his elder daughter, Evelyn, painted in England (Fig. 9). While Bridges may have painted Byrd's younger daughter, Wilhelmina, and the children by his second wife (Anne, Maria, William III, and Jane), Mary Willing Byrd's will lists portraits of Anne, Maria, and William only. Portraits believed to be the likenesses of Anne and William now belong to Colonial Williamsburg, and are almost certainly the work of Bridges; the portrait



Figure 10. Anne Byrd, by Charles Bridges, 1735. Oil on canvas, 50 3/8 X 40 3/8. Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, accession 1957-183.

of Maria Byrd has not been located. In both of the surviving works, the children are shown full-length in antique or classical costume, standing before a wooded background. The girl (Fig. 10) is shown petting a dog; the boy (Fig. 11) is accompanied by a black servant. This type of pose, popular in England more than a generation earlier, had gone out of fashion there, but the elderly Bridges clung to an antiquated style that would have also appealed to

Byrd, since poses of this type were in fashion when he lived in England.⁴⁰

Mary Willing Byrd's will lists three portraits of William Byrd II and it has been speculated that at least one of these was painted by Bridges.⁴¹ There is no evidence of this, however. If Byrd had sat for Bridges, he would surely have mentioned that fact in his letter to Spotswood; it is possible, of course, that Byrd gave Bridges commissions after 1735. In England, it was a long-established



Figure 11. William Byrd III, attributed to Charles Bridges, c. 1735. Oil on canvas, dimensions not recorded. Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, accession G1986-243, MRF S-5214.

tradition that lesser artists were employed to paint children.⁴² Byrd's likeness already had been captured by artists more skilled than Bridges, so there would have been little need for him to sit for Bridges, especially since he already owned three portraits of himself.

It is not known how Byrd displayed his collection at Westover, but some conjecture is possible. The family portraits probably hung in the mansion proper. The portraits of Byrd's friends probably hung in the east flanker of Westover. This dependency was not connected to the main house, but it is known to have contained the library. This building (Fig. 1, right side of the main house), now missing, offered space for the exhibition of paintings along with Byrd's bookcases.⁴³ In England, portrait collections were housed in "long galleries" where their owners could study them while exercising on days when the weather was too inclement to seek recreation outdoors.⁴⁴ We know that Byrd used his library at Westover for the same purpose. He recorded in his diary entry for 2 January 1721 that he had " . . . walked about in the library because it rained and I could not walk abroad."⁴⁵ He no doubt was influenced by the manner in which his English counterparts displayed their portrait collections. Samuel Pepys's library contained seven presses filled with books and surmounted by portraits of such contemporaries as John Evelyn.⁴⁶ When Byrd's library of nearly 4,000 volumes was sold in 1777, the advertisements for the sale stated that the books were "contained in twenty double presses of black walnut."⁴⁷

Byrd family tradition holds that Nathaniel Walthoe, clerk of the Virginia General Assembly, "Left a diamond ring to the Second Col. Byrd, upon condition that he would permit his portrait to hang up in the same room with those of the noblemen. . . ."⁴⁸ This portrait (Fig. 12) may be the work of William Dering, a dancing master in Williamsburg who also was a portrait painter. Byrd was acquainted with him.⁴⁹ If this tradition is correct, Walthoe's portrait was the last to enter the Westover collection during William Byrd's lifetime.⁵⁰ Walthoe's alleged request would appear to indicate that the collection was known and admired by Byrd's fellow Virginians.

William Byrd II died on 26 August 1744. His will makes no mention of his collection except that his entire estate, including "pictures," was to go to his son, William III; in addition, his daughters were left cash bequests.⁵¹ The paintings remained at Westover for another seventy years, until the death of his



Figure 12. Nathaniel Walthoe, possibly by William Dering, c. 1744-1750. Oil on canvas, 29 3/4 X 24 3/4. Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, accession 1956-562.

daughter-in-law, Mary Willing Byrd.⁵² She died in March, 1814; her will, probated the following month, divided the paintings among her children and stepchildren. The largest portions went to her sons Charles Willing, Richard Willing, and William Powel Byrd. Richard died in 1815, and his brothers apparently declined to take possession of the portraits. Most passed into the possession of their sister Evelyn, the wife of Benjamin Harrison of Brandon, and have descended through this branch of Byrd

descendants. A number are now in museum collections: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation owns eight, the Virginia Historical Society owns six, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts each own one. The balance of the collection is either privately owned or has disappeared. Happily, most of the collection is known to exist, and it is entirely possible that the missing pictures will be found.

From the evidence provided by his diary, his library, and his collection, we know that William Byrd II was imbued with a good sense of history, and art, and that he was quite aware of his own status. He was proud of his friendship with the great men of England, and considered that his collection served two purposes: it allowed Byrd to visit vicariously with his English friends after he had returned to Virginia, and it demonstrated Byrd's own prominence to his Virginia friends and neighbors. It is unfortunate that such a prolific writer as Byrd apparently wrote almost nothing regarding his pictures. The paintings themselves, however, tell us in their own way as much about this fascinating gentleman and his world as do his letters and diaries.

Mr. Meschutt is currently writing a catalogue raisonné of the Westover collection. This article in its original form was presented in 1988 as partial completion of the Master's Degree in History Museum Studies at the Cooperstown Graduate Program, State University of New York.

FOOTNOTES

1. Will of Mary Willing Byrd, Charles City County, Virginia, *Will Book 2, 1808-1824*, dated December 1813, recorded 21 April 1814, p. 269. This will is printed in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 30 (April, 1930), 145-154.
2. Marion Tinling, ed., *The Correspondence of the Three William Byrds of Westover, Virginia* (Charlottesville, Va.: The University Press of Virginia, 1977), I, 3-7.
3. Kenneth A. Lockridge, *The Diary, and Life, of William Byrd II of Virginia, 1674-1744* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 14-21.
4. Tinling, *Correspondence*, I, 195-202. This is the best biographical sketch of William Byrd II; that in the *Dictionary of American Biography* was written before Byrd's diaries were discovered.
5. Tinling, *Correspondence*, I, 167, n2; the Royal Society is the oldest scientific society in the world and probably the best known. It grew out of weekly meetings held by English scientists in London in the 1640s and was officially organized in 1660 as the Royal Society of London for Improving Natural Knowledge.
6. Byrd is buried in his garden at Westover. The inscription on his tombstone reads:

Being born to one of the amplest fortunes in this country,
 He was early sent to England for his education,
 Where under the care and direction of Sir Robert Southwell,
 And ever favored with his particular instructions,
 He made a happy proficiency in polite and varied learning.
 By the means of this same noble friend,
 He was introduced to the acquaintance of many of the first persons
 of his age
 For knowledge, wit, virtue, birth, of high station,
 And particularly contracted a most intimate and bosom friendship
 With the learned and illustrious Charles Boyle, Earl of Orrery.
 He was called to the bar in the Middle Temple,
 Studied for some time in the Low Countries,
 Visited the Court of France,
 And was chosen Fellow of the Royal Society.
 Thus eminently fitted for the service and ornament of his country,
 He was made Receiver-General of His Majesty's revenues here,
 Was thrice appointed public agent to the Court and Ministry of
 England,
 And being thirty-seven years a member,
 At last became President of the Council of that Colony.
 To all this were added a great elegance of taste and life,
 The well-bred gentleman and polite companion,
 The splendid economist and prudent father of a family,
 With the constant enemy of all exorbitant power,
 And hearty friend to the liberties of his country.

Personal observation, Westover, Virginia, 27 October 1987.

7. So named by Byrd because the view reminded him of a similar vista at Richmond, England.
8. The estate had been purchased by William Byrd I in 1688.
9. Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), II, 279-285.
10. Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling, *The Secret Diary of William Byrd of Westover, 1709-1712* (Richmond, Va.: Dietz Press, 1941).
11. Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling, eds., *William Byrd of Virginia: The London Diary (1717-1721) and Other Writings* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), 70.
12. Wayne Craven, *Colonial American Portraiture* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 212; David Piper, *Catalogue of Seventeenth-Century Portraits in the National Portrait Gallery* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1963), 402. The best study of Kneller is J. Douglas Stewart, *Sir Godfrey Kneller and the English Baroque Portrait* (Oxford, England: Clarendon Press, 1983).
13. Freeman, *Washington*, 280 and n.25.
14. The possibility exists that there was one artist working in Virginia in the 1690s, an indentured servant of William Fitzhugh. This servant, not otherwise identified, was a trained engraver, and Fitzhugh asked his London agent to send "colours for painting, pencils [i.e., brushes], Walnut Oyl . . . together with half a doz. 3 quarter clothes [stretched canvases] to set up a painter." Craven, *Portraiture*, 186.

A painting of a boy (Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond) and a miniature of a man (unlocated) have both been reproduced as portraits of William Byrd I, but are not of him. They evidently depict Byrd family members of a later generation. William I visited England in 1687-1688, but there is no record of his having sat for a portrait at that time.
15. William Byrd I to Daniel Horsmanden, 25 July 1690, Virginia Historical Society, quoted in Tinling, *Correspondence*, I, 121-122. Daniel's son, also named Daniel, emigrated to New York and eventually became chief justice of that colony.
16. *The Treasure Houses of Britain: Five Hundred Years of Private Patronage and Art Collecting*, catalogue of an exhibition held at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., 3 November 1985 through 16 March 1986 (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985), 29.
17. The Holbein is now owned by the National Portrait Gallery, London. Most of Lumley's collection has been dispersed (what remains has descended to the Earl of Scarborough), but a very detailed inventory was made in 1590.
18. Jonathan Richardson, *An Essay on the Theory of Painting* (2nd ed., 1725; rpt. London: Scolar Press, 1971), 14.
19. *Treasure Houses*, 30. An excellent account of the Clarendon collection is Robin Gibson, *Catalogue of Portraits in the Collection of the Earl of Clarendon* (London: Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, 1977).
20. A number of the Westover portraits are still in their original frames; these frames are uniformly black with carved gilt ornamentation. *Treasure Houses*, 31. A noteworthy feature of the Clarendon collection was that it hung in "fine uniform frames."

21. Dr. Samuel Johnson, *Idler*, no. 45 (24 February 1759). Quoted in Charles Coleman Sellers, *Benjamin Franklin in Portraiture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1962), 5.
22. William Byrd II to the Earl of Egmont, 12 July 1736, Virginia Historical Society, quoted in Tinling, *Correspondence*, II, 487.
23. William Byrd II to Jane Pratt Taylor, 10 October 1735, Virginia Historical Society, *Ibid.*, 462. Jane Pratt, daughter of Lord Chief Justice John Pratt, married in 1719 Thomas Taylor, Jr., brother of Maria Taylor Byrd, William Byrd's second wife. *Ibid.*, 833. I would like to thank Virginius C. Hall, Jr., for bringing this letter to my attention and for clarifying Mrs. Taylor's identity.
24. Craven, *Portraiture*, 184.
25. "The Will of William Fitzhugh," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 2 (1895), 276-277; Craven, *Portraiture*, 184.
26. The portraits of Mr. and Mrs. Randolph belong to the Virginia Historical Society; those of Mr. and Mrs. Lee are privately owned; and that of Bolling is owned by the College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia.
27. Mary Black, "Contributions Toward a History of Early Eighteenth-Century New York Portraiture: The Identification of the Actatis Suae and Wendell Limners," *The American Art Journal* 12 (Autumn 1980) 4: 15. The artist is thought by Mary Black to have been Nehemiah Partridge (fl. 1715-1730), who was also active as a portrait painter in New York's Hudson River Valley. The Brodnax and Jaquelin portraits are on deposit at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts, Richmond.
28. *William and Mary Quarterly* 15 (April, 1907), 279; Craven, *Portraiture*, 197.
29. *Ibid.*, 205-206; Wright and Tinling, *The London Diary*, 49, 88.
30. John Custis to William Byrd II, 10 April 1723, Custis Papers, Library of Congress, quoted in Tinling, *Correspondence*, I, 341-342.
31. John Kerslake, *Early Georgian Portraits in the National Portrait Gallery* (London: Her Majesty's Stationers Office, 1977), 203, suggests that the original might be by Michael Dahl. I have seen Byrd's copy and a photograph of the original. Byrd's picture appears to be by a different, less talented hand from that which drew the original.
32. The portraits of Lawson and Dutton owned by Byrd are the only ones known of those gentlemen.
33. Ellis Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain: 1530-1790* (Baltimore, Md.: Penguin Books, 1969), 97.
34. Byrd gave the portrait to his friend Charles Boyle, 4th Earl of Orrery, who bequeathed it to Sarah Otway, a niece of Maria Taylor Byrd, second wife of William Byrd II. It was purchased from her heirs in this century by a direct descendant of the sitter, also named William Byrd. His son, another William Byrd, gave it to the Virginia Historical Society in 1973. Virginius C. Hall, Jr., *Portraits in the Collection of the Virginia Historical Society: A Catalogue* (Charlottesville, Va.: The University Press of Virginia, 1981), 41-42. I would like to thank Dr. J. Douglas Stewart for suggesting the attribution to Hysing.

35. The three-quarter-length originally belonged to Egmont and is now owned by Oglethorpe University, Atlanta, Georgia. Byrd's replica of the Earl of Egmont was owned in 1922 by Mrs. Stephen Decatur Mayo of Gloucester, Virginia, but is at present unlocated.
36. *Diary of the First Earl of Egmont* (London: Historical Manuscripts Commission, 1923), II, 154.
37. Information in a letter from Dr. Malcolm Rogers, Deputy Director, National Portrait Gallery, London, to the author, 21 October 1987.
38. Waterhouse, *Painting in Britain*, 128.
39. William Byrd II to Alexander Spotswood, 22 December 1735, Virginia Historical Society, quoted in Tinling, *Correspondence*, II, 468.
40. Graham Hood, *Charles Bridges and William Dering: Two Virginia Painters, 1735-1750* (Williamsburg, Va.: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1978), 100.
41. Henry Wilder Foote, "Charles Bridges, 'Sergeant-Painter of Virginia,' 1735-1740," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 60 (January, 1952), 9, 26, 27.
42. Stewart, *Sir Godfrey Kneller*, 75.
43. Mark R. Wenger, "Westover: William Byrd's Mansion Reconsidered." Master's thesis. University of Virginia, 1980, 53. The east flanker burned during the Civil War.
44. John Cornforth and John Fowler, *Eighteenth Century Decoration in England* (Princeton, N. J.: The Pyne Press, 1974), 232; *Treasure Houses*, 124.
45. Wright and Tinling, *London Diary*, 494.
46. Wenger, "Westover," 53.
47. Ibid.
48. W. S. Morton, contrib., "The portraits at Lower Brandon and Upper Brandon, Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd series, 10 (October, 1930): 340 (listed erroneously as "Mr. Waltham"). The diamond, which has been reset several times, was owned by a Byrd descendant in 1940.
49. Hood, *Bridges*, 100.
50. The possibility exists that Walthoe gave it to William Byrd III rather than his father. Apart from the portraits of Byrd family members, Walthoe's is the only portrait of a Virginian in the Westover collection.
51. A copy of Byrd's will belongs to the James Monroe Museum and Memorial Library, Fredericksburg, Virginia; it is printed in Tinling, *Correspondence*, II, 597-598, 600.
52. Mary Willing Byrd was the widow of William Byrd III, who had died by his own hand on New Year's Day, 1777. Several portraits were added to the collection during their ownership, all but one of family members. The exception was a portrait of Benjamin Franklin, who had known Mrs. Byrd when she was growing up in Philadelphia.

APPENDIX

Preliminary Checklist of the Paintings Owned by William Byrd II.

Most of the Westover collection subsequently hung at Brandon (built c. 1765) and Upper Brandon (built 1820), homes of the Harrison family. The Harrisons of Brandon were descendants of William Byrd II through his granddaughter Evelyn (b. 1766-after 1814), who married Benjamin Harrison of Brandon (born 1743-1807). The remainder of the paintings from Byrd's collection descended in other branches of his family. All of the paintings from Westover appear to have remained in the possession of the various Byrd descendants until the early part of this century.

1. *William Byrd II*, attributed to Sir Godfrey Kneller, circa 1695-1700. Owner: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, Williamsburg, Virginia.
2. *William Byrd II*, artist unknown. Listed in Mary Willing Byrd's will. Unlocated
3. *William Byrd II*, artist unknown. Listed in Mary Willing Byrd's will. Unlocated.
4. *Mrs. William Byrd II*, née Lucy Parke (1688-1716), artist unknown. Listed in Mary Willing Byrd's will. Unlocated. (Possibly the portrait in a private collection in Virginia.)
5. *Mrs. William Byrd II*, née Maria Taylor (1698-1771), by an unidentified British artist, circa 1725. Owner: Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York.
6. *Anne Byrd* (daughter of William and Maria Taylor Byrd, b. 1725), by Charles Bridges, 1735. Owner: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
7. *Evelyn Byrd* (daughter of William and Lucy Parke Byrd) (1707-1737), by an unidentified British artist, circa 1725. Owner: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
8. *William Byrd III* (son of William and Maria Taylor Byrd) (1728-1777), attributed to Charles Bridges, 1735. Owner: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
9. *William Blathwayt* (1649-1717), politician, by an unidentified British artist. Mentioned in Mary Willing Byrd's will. Unlocated.
10. *Martha Blount* (1690-1762), "Patty Blount," friend of Alexander Pope, by an unidentified British artist. Mentioned in Mary Willing Byrd's will (erroneously as "Mr. Blunt"). Owner: Private collection of a Byrd descendant.
11. *Charles Boyle*, 4th Earl of Orrery (1676-1731), by an unidentified British artist. Owner: Private collection of a Byrd descendant.
12. *Mr. Brent*, friend of William Byrd II, listed in Mary Willing Byrd's will, but not otherwise identified. Artist unknown. Unlocated.
13. *John Campbell*, 2nd Duke of Argyll (1680-1743), by William Aikman, circa 1717. Owner: Virginia Historical Society.
14. *Mary Churchill*, Duchess of Montagu (b. 1689), youngest daughter of John Churchill, 1st Duke of Marlborough, studio of Sir Godfrey Kneller, circa 1722-1726. Owner: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
15. *Lady Elizabeth Cromwell* (d. 1709), wife of Edward Southwell, daughter-in-law of Sir Robert Southwell, and an early inamorata of William Byrd

- II, by an unidentified British artist. Probably the portrait in the private collection of a Byrd descendant.
16. *Mr. Dutton*, a London barrister and friend of William Byrd II (not further identified), by an unidentified British artist. Owner: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
 17. *William Anne Keppel*, 2nd Earl of Albemarle (1702-1754), by an unidentified British artist. Owned in 1950 by a Byrd descendant, now unlocated.
 18. *Sir Wilfrid Lawson* (1696-1737), M. P. for Cumberland, attributed to Hans Hysing, circa 1722-1726. Owner: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
 19. *Charles Montagu*, Earl of Halifax (1661-1715), statesman, studio of Michael Dahl, circa 1710-1715. Owner: Virginia Historical Society.
 20. *Daniel Parke* (1669-1710), father-in-law of William Byrd II, aide-de-campe to the Duke of Marlborough at the Battle of Blenheim, and Governor of the Leeward Islands, by John Closterman, circa 1705. Owner: Virginia Historical Society.
 21. *John Perceval*, 1st Earl of Egmont (1683-1748), attributed to Hans Hysing, circa 1734. Owner: Private collection of a Byrd descendant.
 22. *Sir Robert Southwell* (1635-1702), diplomat, studio of Sir Godfrey Kneller, circa 1696-1704. Owner: Virginia Historical Society.
 23. *Elizabeth Southwell*, daughter of Sir Robert Southwell, by an unidentified British artist. Mentioned in Mary Willing Byrd's will. Unlocated.
 24. *Mrs. Jane Pratt Taylor*, sister-in-law of William Byrd II's second wife, by Enoch Seeman, 1734. Owner: Virginia Historical Society.
 25. *Sir Charles Wager* (1666-1743), admiral, by an unidentified British artist. Owner: Private collection of a Byrd descendant.
 26. *Sir Robert Walpole*, 1st Earl of Orford (1676-1745), statesman, by an unidentified British artist. Owner: Virginia Historical Society.
 27. Nathaniel Walthoe (d. 1770), clerk of the Virginia General Assembly, attributed to William Dering, circa 1744-1750. This may have belonged to William Byrd III, rather than his father. Owner: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.
 28. *Portrait of a Boy*, by an unidentified British artist, circa 1680(?) or later. This has been identified as a portrait of William Byrd I (1652-1704) but the painting appears to be a generation later than that of William I's childhood. Owner: Virginia Museum of Fine Arts.
 29. *Portrait "of Rubins [sic]"* (so listed in Mary Willing Byrd's will). A portrait of a man, said to be by Peter Paul Rubens, belonged in 1899 to a Byrd descendant, Mrs. A. C. Bevan of Clarke County, Virginia. Unlocated.
 30. *Portrait "of Titian"* (so listed in Mrs. Byrd's will). A painting said to be of Venus and by Titian belonged to Byrd descendants in California in 1899. Unlocated.

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